

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

March 4, 2009

My name is Mary Morgan Wolff and I'm here to ask you to repeal CT's death penalty law through HB6578, to abolish capital punishment, and to replace it with life in prison without the possibility of release.

I retired from the CT Department of Correction in 2002 as a Deputy Warden. "I did my time," 27 years in CT's correctional facilities, from volunteer to counselor to deputy warden, to warden. I am not here today representing the Department of Correction, but there are a number of "RETIRED DOCers" with me today, who also want you to abolish the death penalty. They are:

Bob Carbone, a Captain,

Ed Davies, a Warden,

Carol Dunn, a Warden,

Roger Everson, a Warden,

Bob Gillis, Director of Parole and Community Services,

David Marcial, a Warden,

Peter Matos, a Deputy Commissioner of Operations,

Peg Pinton, a School Teacher in USD#1,

Ed Quinlan, a Director of Community Services,

Kathy Taylor, a Counselor Supervisor,

Bill Tuthill, a Warden and Assistant Deputy Commissioner, and

Bill Wilson, a Deputy Warden.

A number of other former DOCers would have been here if they could. Among them are:

Larry Albert, Acting Commissioner during the Governor O'Neil administration and Deputy Commissioner for 14 years thereafter, and

Lynda Rowan, a Warden.

We all worked with 'lifers'. We ensured public safety, witnessing that life in prison without the possibility of release is a civilized response to serious crime. We worked hard to ensure the safety of staff and offenders and to keep down the cost of incarceration.

Years ago when Northern CI was targeted for death row and the execution chamber, I was asked by my Commissioner to be the Warden of that facility. I declined his offer. Ethically, I could not oversee an execution of another human being. I could not be part of a State-sponsored execution in which the death of one of our citizens is planned, deliberated, timed, witnessed and carried out with precision. I would have been required to announce a death warrant, have the inmate extracted from the cell, have him/her strapped to a gurney, give the order to release the killing chemicals through an IV, ensure that the inmate is dead and have the body removed. My Commissioner understood and instead promoted me to Warden of another maximum security facility.

The time is NOW:

to cut costs and abolish the death penalty,
to stop following in the footsteps of the criminal who has committed a heinous crime, by committing another heinous, but "legal" act,
to stop wasting money, while trying to decide what crime is heinous enough for the death penalty and what crime isn't. The time is NOW
to stand with the 14 other states and 135 countries that have already rejected the death penalty.

Clearly, support for HB6578 is to place ourselves on the right side of history! I, we, thank you.

Mary Morgan Wolff
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